



New Theatre Complex for Digby Gets Go-Ahead

Department of Education and Culture (to July 99)

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If "all the world's a stage," then a window on the world is about to open in Digby. A partnership between government agencies and the people of Digby has resulted in plans to include a new community theatre complex in the new Digby Regional High School.

Education and Culture Minister Robbie Harrison said community support played a key role in making the theatre in Digby a reality.

"Visual and performing arts are flourishing in our communities. In turn, parents, teachers and communities -- who are at the table as we design our schools -- are rightfully demanding that fine arts programs share the stage with mathematics, languages and other essential elements of our curriculum," said Mr. Harrison.

The venue will use the school's music room as a "green-room," or area where performers can relax during productions. Some of the theatre's soft-seat chairs will be fitted with drop-down writing pads so the facility can be converted to a lecture-theatre for the school.

Keeping their goal centre-stage, community members have put together a cast of major players in provincial and municipal governments, local benefactors and the school itself. With contributions totalling nearly \$500,000, the fund-raising effort has received rave reviews.

"The theatre will provide both a first-class performance education venue, and a place where all students -- and the community -- can gather to experience performances as well," said Elliott Payzant, chair of the Southwest Regional School Board.

Local governments played important supporting roles in the funding of the 300-seat theatre.

"For our communities, this theatre will be an important focal point for entertainment and cultural enrichment," said Digby Mayor Frank MacKintosh.

"Finally, the people of the town and municipality of Digby will have a place to gather for theatre and concert events. More than an important centre of education, the new Digby Regional High School will become a venue for artistic expression for the entire area," said municipal Warden David Irvine.

While the script for the new theatre relies mainly on funding from two levels of government involving five individual government agencies, bank manager Jim Wilson is organizing an important local fund-raising campaign as well.

"I have believed from the beginning that this is a wonderful

opportunity," said Mr. Wilson, manager at the local Royal Bank branch.

Plans for the new theatre are currently under way. Construction on the high school renovations and theatre complex is scheduled to begin in the spring.

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